

A. Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A system for matching entities having needs to entities having capability to meet the needs, the system comprising:

a plurality of needs profiles, wherein each need profile comprises a data record specifying attributes about a need;

5 a plurality of capability profiles, wherein each capability profile comprises a data record specifying set of attributes of an entity having a capability of meeting a need; and

a matching engine coupled to repetitively and automatically examine the needs profiles and capability profiles to identify matched profiles, wherein
10 a match comprises a set of profiles judged to be substantially compatible based upon correspondence of the attributes specified therein.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising a notification message generated to first and second users associated with a matched profile.

3. (Original) The system of claim 2 wherein the notification message includes a selected subset of attributes from the matched profile(s).

4. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 3 further comprising:

a response message generated by a recipient of a notification message; and

a detailed notification message generated to the users associated with
5 the matched profiles in response to receiving response messages from both users associated with a particular matched profile.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the each need profile specifies attributes that describe a human resources need and each capability profile comprises attributes that describe skills of a job candidate.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein the job candidate attributes include attributes describing the associated candidate's qualifications.

7. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein the job candidate attributes describe the associated candidate's desire to use particular skills in a future employment.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the needs profile data record is persistent.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the capability profile data record is persistent.

10. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein each need profile is associated with an entity and is generated by the associated entity without knowledge of any capability profile.

11. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein each capability profile is associated with an entity and is generated by the associated entity without knowledge of any need profile.

12. (Original) A job applicant agent comprising:

a user interface for gathering information from a job applicant;

a data record generated from the gathered information, the data record comprising a plurality of attributes describing skills of an associated job applicant, the data record being formatted for use in and continuously accessible by an external matching engine; and

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a network interface configured to communicate the data record to the external matching engine.

13. (Original) The applicant agent of claim 12 wherein the data record is formatted to enable the external matching engine to readily detect matches between the described skills and required skills of a hiring agent data record accessible by the matching engine.

14. (Original) The applicant agent of claim 12 wherein the data record further comprises attributes describing the associated job applicant's desire to utilize specified skills in future job assignments.

15. (Original) An automated hiring agent comprising:
a user interface for gathering information from a human hiring agent;
a data record generated from the gathered information, the data record comprising a plurality of attributes describing skills required by an associated
5 job, the data record being formatted for use in and continuously accessible by an external matching engine; and

a network interface configured to communicate the data record to the external matching engine.

16. (Currently Amended) The hiring agent of claim ~~[[13]]~~ 15 wherein the data record is formatted to enable the external matching engine to readily detect matches between the required skills and described skills of a job applicant agent data record accessible by the matching engine.

17. (Currently Amended) The hiring agent of claim ~~[[13]]~~ 15 further comprising a template data record, the template data record comprising predefined attributes describing the skills required by the associated job, wherein the user interface is populated with information from the template
5 data record before gathering information from the human hiring agent.

18. (Original) A matching engine for matching attributes specified by a plurality of hiring agents with attributes specified by a plurality of job applicant agents, the matching engine comprising:

5 a database storing a plurality of hiring agents and a plurality of job applicant agents;

a mechanism for continuously comparing profiles in the database to identify matches between hiring agents and job applicant agents.

19. (Original) The matching engine of claim 18 further comprising a notification mechanism responsive to identification of a match for notifying users associated with agents associated with a match.

20. (Currently Amended) The matching engine of claim 18 further comprising:

an interface receiving job applicant agent profiles;

an interface receiving hiring agent profiles;

5 wherein the mechanism for continuously comparing profiles is invoked in response to receiving a new profile ~~profile~~.

21. (Original) A method for incrementally revealing information in a profile matching system comprising:

providing a plurality of profiles, each profile associated with a user and each profile comprising a set of attributes describing the associated user;

5 at least one restricted information section within a profile such that the profile can be accessed while the restricted information remains protected;

automatically matching profiles based on correspondence of attributes specified in the profiles, including attributes within the restricted section;

10 presenting automatically matched profiles to users associated with the profile in a manner that prevents exposing the restricted information section;

enabling each user that is presented with a matched profile to indicate further interest; and

responsive to receiving indication of further interest from all users associated with a matched profile, presenting detailed information including
15 the restricted information section.

22. (Currently Amended) A state machine for use in an human resources matching engine, the state machine comprising:

an unmatched state;

an automatched state reached from the unmatched state upon
5 detection of a substantial correspondence between a first stored profile and a second stored profile;

a first interested state reached from the automatched state upon indication that a user associated with the first stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the second stored profile;

10 a second interested state reached from the automatched state upon indication that a user associated with the second stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the second stored profile;

a not interested state reached from the automatched state upon indication that either the user associated with the first stored profile or the
15 user associated with the second stored profile is not interested in pursuing a relationship with the other user; and

an evaluating state reached from the first interested state upon indication that a user associated with the second stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the first ~~second~~ stored
20 profile or upon indication that a user associated with the first stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the second stored profile.

23. (Currently Amended) A method for matching job applicants with hiring agents, the method comprising the acts of:

generating a plurality of needs profiles, wherein each needs profile comprises attributes about a need associated with a particular hiring agent;
5 ~~agent~~

storing the needs profiles as a data record;
generating a plurality of capability profiles, wherein each capability
profile attributes of a job applicant;
storing the capabilities profiles as a data record; and
10 repetitively and automatically matching the needs profiles and
capability profiles to identify matched profiles, wherein a match comprises a
set of profiles judged to be substantially compatible based upon
correspondence of the attributes specified therein.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23 further notifying first and second
users associated with a matched profile in identifying a matched profile.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the act of notifying
comprising presenting a selected subset of attributes from the matched profile
to users associated with the matched profile.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25 further comprising:
responding to the notification with an indication of further interest in the
identified match; and

generating a detailed notification message to the users associated with
5 the matched profiles in response to receiving response messages from both
users associated with a particular matched profile.

27. (Original) The method of claim 23 wherein the act of generating a
capability profile comprises including attributes within the capability profile that
describe the associated user's desire to apply particular skills in a future
employment.

28. (Original) A signal-bearing medium tangibly embodying a program
of machine-readable instructions executable by a digital processing apparatus
to perform a method for job applicants with hiring agents, the method
comprising:

- 5 generating a plurality of needs profiles, wherein each needs profile comprises attributes about a need associated with a particular hiring agent;
 storing the needs profiles as a data record;
 generating a plurality of capability profiles, wherein each capability profile attributes of a job applicant;
- 10 storing the capabilities profiles as a data record; and
 repetitively and automatically matching the needs profiles and capability profiles to identify matched profiles, wherein a match comprises a set of profiles judged to be substantially compatible based upon correspondence of the attributes specified therein.